



URBAN GREENING PLAN

PARKS MASTER PLAN

ALAMEDA, CALIFORNIA

ADMINISTRATIVE DRAFT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER 2 - CONTEXT..... 3

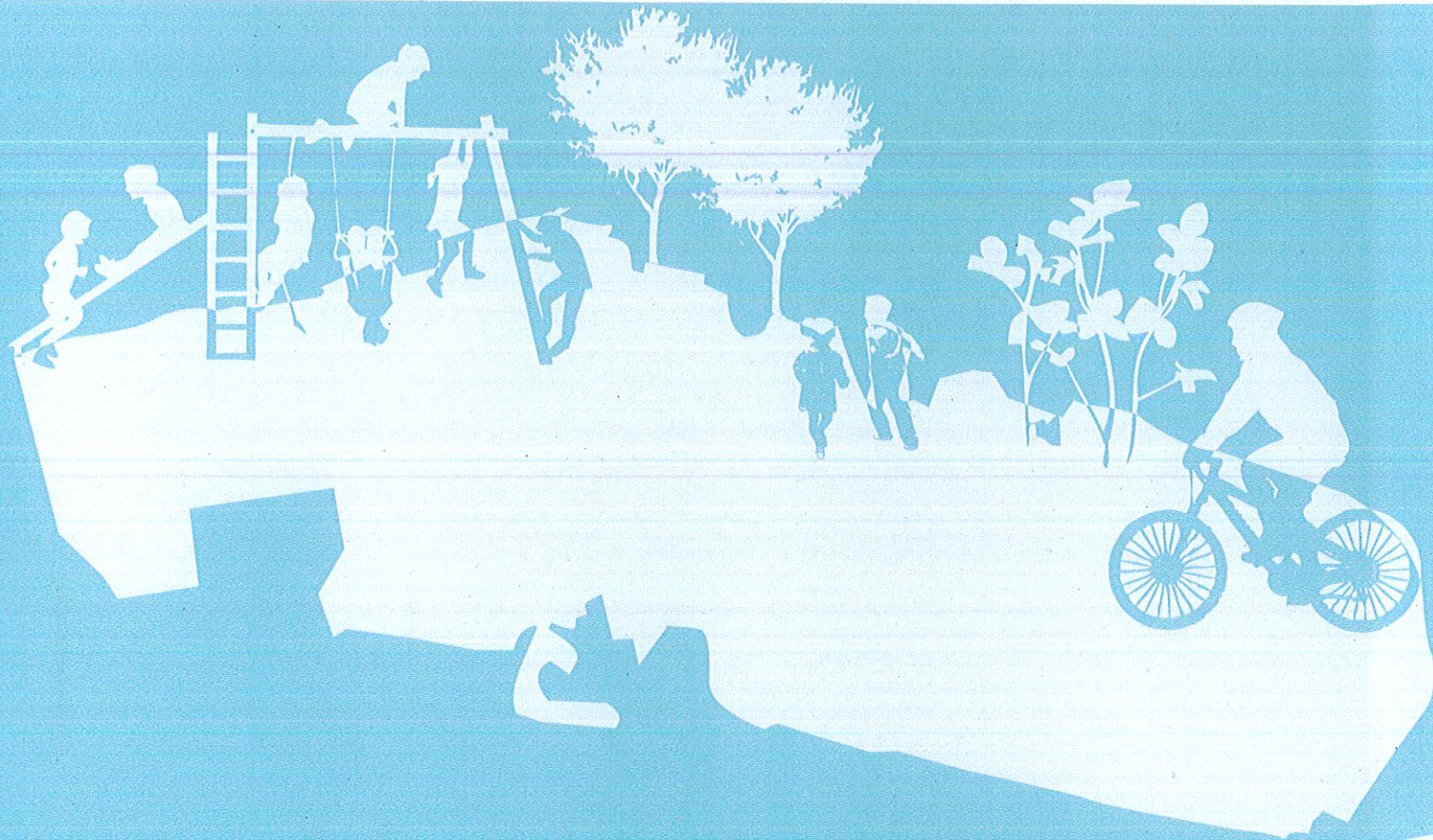
CHAPTER 3 - PARK INVENTORY 12

CHAPTER 4 - COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT..... 117

CHAPTER 5 - GOALS AND STANDARDS 127

CHAPTER 6 - RECOMMENDATIONS 135

APPENDICES 154



CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

DRAFT

URBAN GREENING PLAN

The City of Alameda provides its citizens with a full service Recreation and Parks Department which administers an extensive system of local parks, athletic fields, dog parks, skate parks, historical museums, gymnasiums, a model airplane field, community center and senior center.

In developing this Parks Master Plan, Alameda had the foresight to create a community endorsed comprehensive vision to allow the City to strategically refine, renovate and enhance the park system to meet the evolving needs of the community.

In developing an “Urban Greening Plan” the City sought to look beyond the bounds of a typical parks master plan to explore a breadth of components that create livable communities.

The City sought and was awarded an Urban Greening Planning Grant from the multi-jurisdictional Strategic Growth Council (SGC), the public agency delegated with the responsibility of administering grant funds provided under the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84). The City’s grant application proposed integrating new planning efforts with existing planning documents (i.e., Local Action Plan for Climate Protection and Bay Friendly Landscape Ordinance) into a comprehensive citywide Urban Greening Plan targeted at mitigation of the long-term effects of climate change and making the City a more sustainable and healthier community. The Urban Greening Plan will take an integrated approach to addressing new and existing parks and open space; streetscapes; trails for biking and walking; urban farming opportunities; stormwater retention; coastline protection; and other means of helping the City meet its greenhouse gas emission reduction goals.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Parks Master Plan is a key component of the Urban Greening Plan. The Plan inventories and assesses the existing parks, facilities and programs. It summarizes an extensive community needs assessment. Based the current and projected community needs, it sets forth goals and standards for provision of parks and recreational facilities. It then details recommendations for prioritization of park improvements and additional parks and facilities, and presents options for approaching future park development, and recommends policies form maximizing the use of City resources for the benefit of the Alameda Community. Appendices contain documentation of the community outreach process, cost and expense information, and potential grant funding sources for park improvements.

In addition to this Introduction, the Parks Master Plan is divided into the following distinct Chapters:

Context

A successful Parks Master Plan is tailored to reflect the special characteristics and values of the community. In this chapter, unique physical characteristics of this island community, its demographics and the make-up of the community are explored, as well as the regional recreational context.

A mostly built-out community with well distributed neighborhood parks, Alameda’s population is expected to increase at a relatively slow rate. The community is rooted and vested in Alameda, and appreciate their surroundings, as evidenced by long average residency length for both homeowners and renters. Alameda’s population is diverse in age, indicating that the park system will need to address the needs of children and youth, families, adults, and a growing population of seniors.

Existing Conditions

This chapter provides a snapshot of the Alameda Recreation and Parks District (ARPD) resources. In this chapter the existing parks, facilities and programs are inventoried and evaluated. Each park site and facility, is described in detail, deficiencies are identified, and specific recommendations are made.

As part of the Urban Greening Plan, the existing trees at each park and the Chuck Corica Golf Complex were inventoried and evaluated. The tree inventory is contained in a separate document.

Typically, Alameda’s parks and facilities are well maintained, although some infrastructure and buildings (especially at Alameda Point) are aging and in need of repair or renovation. The City sponsors a wide range of programming, both in ARPD facilities and in partnership with other venues. There are a number of locations that have been identified as future parks sites or as potential park sites, which provide the City with the opportunity to continue to expand its park system and its recreational offerings.

Community Needs Assessment

This chapter describes the recreational needs assessment, which was conducted through community surveys, workshops, and stakeholder meetings and interviews. Through the needs assessment, an understanding was gained regarding the community’s perceptions of Alameda’s park system, the activities and facilities

that are most valued, the improvements that are most desired, and the types of programming that is of the most interest for future parks and facilities.

A telephone survey of a cross-section of 400 Alameda residents generated a statistically valid picture of the community's park use patterns, perceptions about the existing system, preferences for specific improvement options, recommendations about future recreation opportunities at Alameda Point, and interest in community gardens. The survey was also posted on the City's web site, so that other interested residents could also give their input.

Generally, the results of the surveys were consistent with input received from stakeholder meetings and interviews, and community workshops. There is typically a high level of satisfaction with the existing parks system. Through the needs assessment process, the areas of interest that emerged were generally:

- Open Space: more natural open space, expansion of the City's trail system, community gardens;
- Community Facilities: an indoor aquatic center, a performing arts center, a community center with dedicated teen space, more group picnic areas, a sports complex;
- Competitive Sports: more baseball, softball and soccer fields, additional tennis courts, more gym space, a sports complex;
- Special Interests: fenced dog parks, BMX, bocce.

Goals and Standards

Based on the needs assessment and existing conditions, this chapter describes quantifiable goals and standards which outline the Alameda community's vision for the parks and recreation elements of their Urban Greening Plan. These goals and standards will help guide the City as it evaluates opportunities that arise for development of parks and facilities. They set a framework for provision of recreation services to the Alameda community as the City's population grows. Goals and standards for Alameda include:

Park Acreage and Distribution

- Provide a minimum of 3 acres of neighborhood and community park per 1,000 residents.
- All residents should be within a 5-minute walk of a park, open space or trail.

Sports Fields

- For baseball and softball, provide one (1) diamond field for every 2,600 residents.
- For soccer, football, rugby and lacrosse, provide one (1) rectangular field for every 3,000 residents.
- Consolidate sports fields to provide a community sports facility with competitive fields and concession areas to facilitate tournament play.

Buildings and Facilities System Goals

- Maximize existing resources - where possible, reuse existing City buildings rather than build new;
- Maximize partnerships - in order to provide efficient and sustainable services, continue to leverage partnerships for both recreation programs and facilities;
- Maximize revenue - consider cost recovery opportunities, design flexibility, independent use, and opportunities for rentals and revenue generation; and
- Maximize efficiency - reduce operational duplication and provide services, programs, and facilities as efficiently as possible.

Recommendations

Finally, this chapter addresses specific recommendations and options for implementing the goals and standards, including renovation of existing facilities and sites, and opportunities for future expansion. This chapter also identifies costs associated with recommendations and implementation action items, and a range of possible funding sources.

PARKS RECOMMENDATIONS

- Preserve and Enhance Existing Parks and Facilities.
Maintenance, upkeep and improvements over time are essential for preserving infrastructure and for continuing to provide functional, inviting and attractive parks.
- Develop Additional Park Acreage.
Develop the sites identified as potential or future parks over time, which will allow the City to meet its goal of 3 acres per 1,000 residents.
- Improve Access for All Residents.
Prioritize identified park sites in areas that are currently under served, and improve and expand the City's trail system to provide recreational opportunities and improve access to parks and shoreline.

- Provide Additional Sports Fields.

To address the immediate shortfall in sports fields, one 90' diamond field and two 60' diamond fields, as well as five rectangular multi-use fields are needed. As Alameda's population grows, additional fields will be needed. The chapter describes a range of options for meeting these current and future needs at identified future and potential park sites.

- Provide Additional Passive Open Space, Habitat Areas, Trails and Shoreline Access.

Access to natural open space and trails ranked as the highest priority for most Alameda residents. Partnerships with East Bay Regional Parks District, expansion of Alameda's trail system and shoreline access, and open space planning for Alameda Point are among the recommended strategies.

- Develop Beltline Park as a Community Park to Meet the Needs of a Cross-Section of the Community.

The centrally located, 22-acre site on the former Belt Line Rail Yard is an ideal site for a wide range of uses. Options are beginning to emerge with regard to the development of the Alameda Beltline property. They all include community garden areas (also ranked highly by the public) and a number of potential variations of athletic fields and community center building configurations.

- Pursue Partnering Options for Providing Additional Facilities and Programs.

With shrinking budgets and increasing demands, partnerships with other public entities, such as EBRPD, or private organizations, such as the Boys and Girls Club, are an effective means of providing additional parks, open space, facilities and programs.

- Ensure Ongoing Funding of Park Maintenance and Maximize Maintenance Efficiencies.

In order to continue to provide the excellent quality of parks that the residents of Alameda currently enjoy, ongoing maintenance must be of the highest priority. Whether considering existing parks and facilities, expanding or improving existing facilities, or adding new parks and facilities, ensuring funding for maintenance is essential.

Costs for construction and maintenance, including life-cycle costs for park improvements are included in this chapter.

BUILDING FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

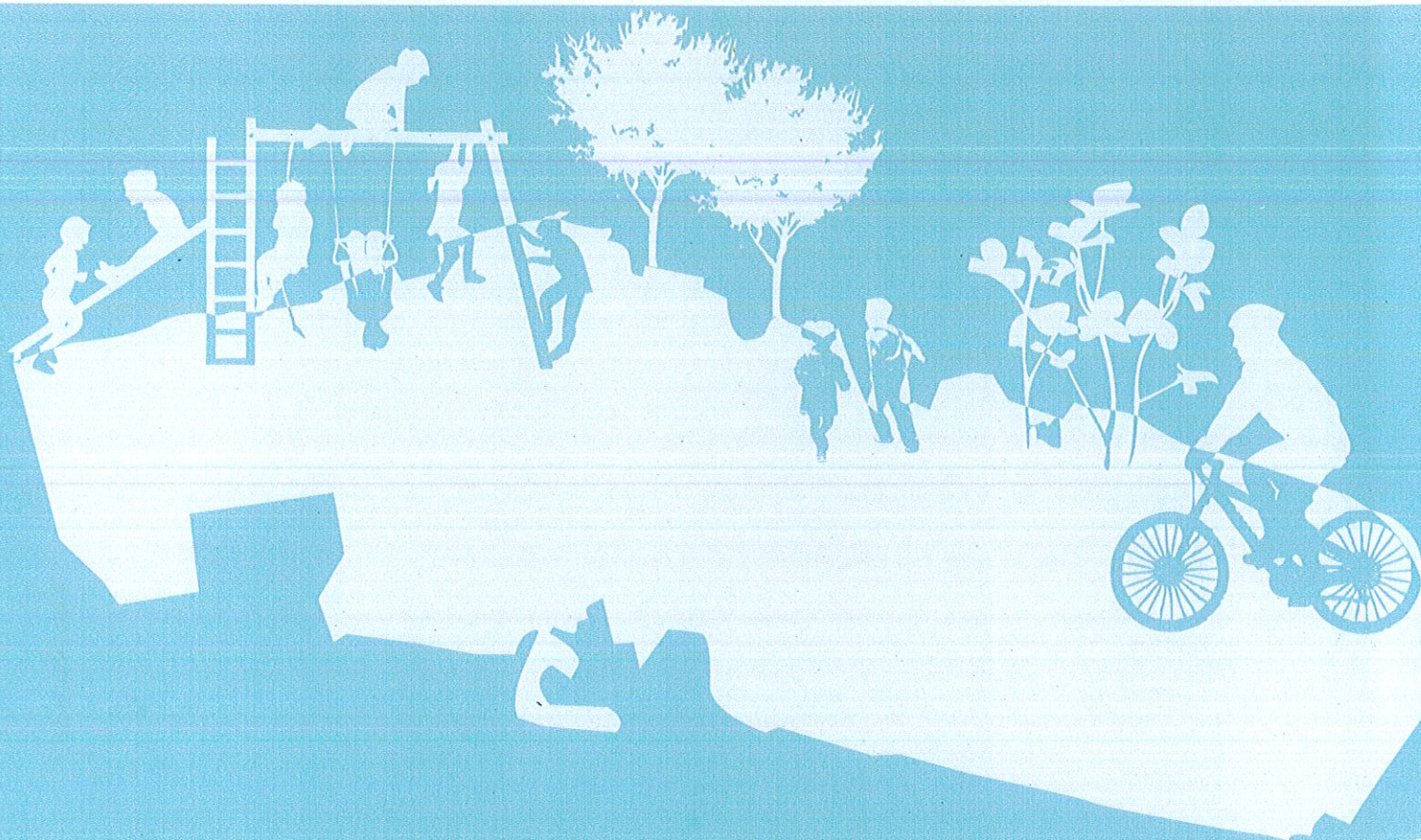
Based on analysis and evaluation of several scenarios described in this section, a hybrid preferred option was developed that includes the following:

- Renovate the Alameda Point Gym at its current size of approximately 35,000 square feet to improve support for citywide and regional sports programming. The renovation program would include improved courts, bleachers, and support spaces. The site of the adjacent pool building would be repurposed.
- Renovate the Officers Club at its current size of approximately 32,000 square feet to develop large program/event space for community use and rentals. A full service kitchen to support banquet rentals is a priority.
- Develop a new community center of approximately 35,000-40,000 square feet in an accessible central location in the city. Significant program elements include a small gymnasium, teen center, large program/event space, and preschool programs.

Various funding options are described in this chapter.

Appendices

Appendices are included which offer more detail of the Community Surveys and Community Workshops. A Parks Tree Survey and other Urban Greening Strategies are contained in a separate document.



CHAPTER 5 - GOALS AND STANDARDS

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PARK GOALS AND STANDARDS

Alameda has a well used and well loved park system. Alameda's Recreation and Parks Department (ARPD) offers a wide array of facilities and services. A high percentage of Alameda residents are frequent park users, and most have positive perceptions of their parks. In order to continue to meet the needs of Alameda's residents, and to maintain those positive perceptions, the City must establish clear goals and standards for their park and recreation facilities. Standards are derived national standards and comparable standards in surrounding communities. However, the standards have been evaluated and adjusted to account for the unique use patterns, needs and desires of Alameda's residents, and the characteristics and resources of the City.

Acreage

California cities typically strive to meet acreage standards of 3 to 6 acres per 1,000 residents. Under the state's Quimby Act, cities have the right to require new development to contribute land or funding to provide a minimum of 3 acres or parkland per 1,000 new residents. The City currently provides approximately 2 acres of park and recreation space per 1,000 residents (not including the 325+ acre Chuck Corica Golf Complex). As the population grows and Alameda is further built out, it is appropriate to set 3 acres per 1,000 residents as the City standard. As Alameda Point develops, new residential development should provide 3 acres of neighborhood park per 1,000 new residents. Aside from Alameda Point, there are limited sites available within the City for development of new parks. There have been, however, a number of sites identified that can allow the City to meet the standard of 3 acres per 1,000 total population over time.

Park & Open Space Acreages		Current population: 72,500	With Alameda Point Build-out: 77,000	2030 population (projected): 80,000
Existing, per ARPD				
Total:	141.6 acres	1.95 AC / 1,000	1.84 AC / 1,000	1.77 AC / 1,000
Alameda Point Soccer Fields (Not including Main Street (3.5 acres) or Hornet (2 acres))				
2 nd Street:	3.5 acres	2.0 AC / 1,000	1.9 AC / 1,000	1.8 AC / 1,000
Total:	145.1 acres			
Planned parks				
Beltline:	22 acres			
Boatworks:	<u>2 acres</u>	2.3 AC / 1,000	2.2 AC / 1,000	2.1 AC / 1,000
Sub-total:	24 acres			
Total:	169 acres			
Proposed parks				
North Loop Road Park:	12 acres			
Coast Guard Sports Fields	12 acres			
Encinal Terminal:	6 acres	3.0 AC / 1,000	2.8 AC / 1,000	2.7 AC / 1,000
Mt. Trashmore:	<u>20 acres</u>			
Sub-total:	46 acres			
Total:	219 acres			
Future Alameda Point Parks				
Neighborhood Parks and Community Sports Park:	30 acres	3.4 AC / 1,000	3.2 AC / 1,000	3..1 AC / 1,000
Total:	249 acres			

Note: Does not include future EBRPD Alameda Point Parks, or Chuck Corica Golf Complex.

Figure 5.1 - City Park & Open Space Acreages

Although at 3 acres per 1,000 residents, the overall acreage for City parks would only meet the minimum acreage established in the Quimby Act, it is more than adequate when other factors are taken into account.

- East Bay Regional Parks District (EBRPD) currently operates the 80-acre Crown Beach area along the southern shoreline of Alameda. When Alameda Point is developed, at least an additional 145 acres of open space will be provided for passive uses. This would bring the projected park acreage to almost 6 acres per 1,000 residents at the year 2030. Immediately south of the City, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline provides over 700 acres of additional open space available to residents. It should be noted that passive open space for hiking and walking is expressed by the community as their highest priority.

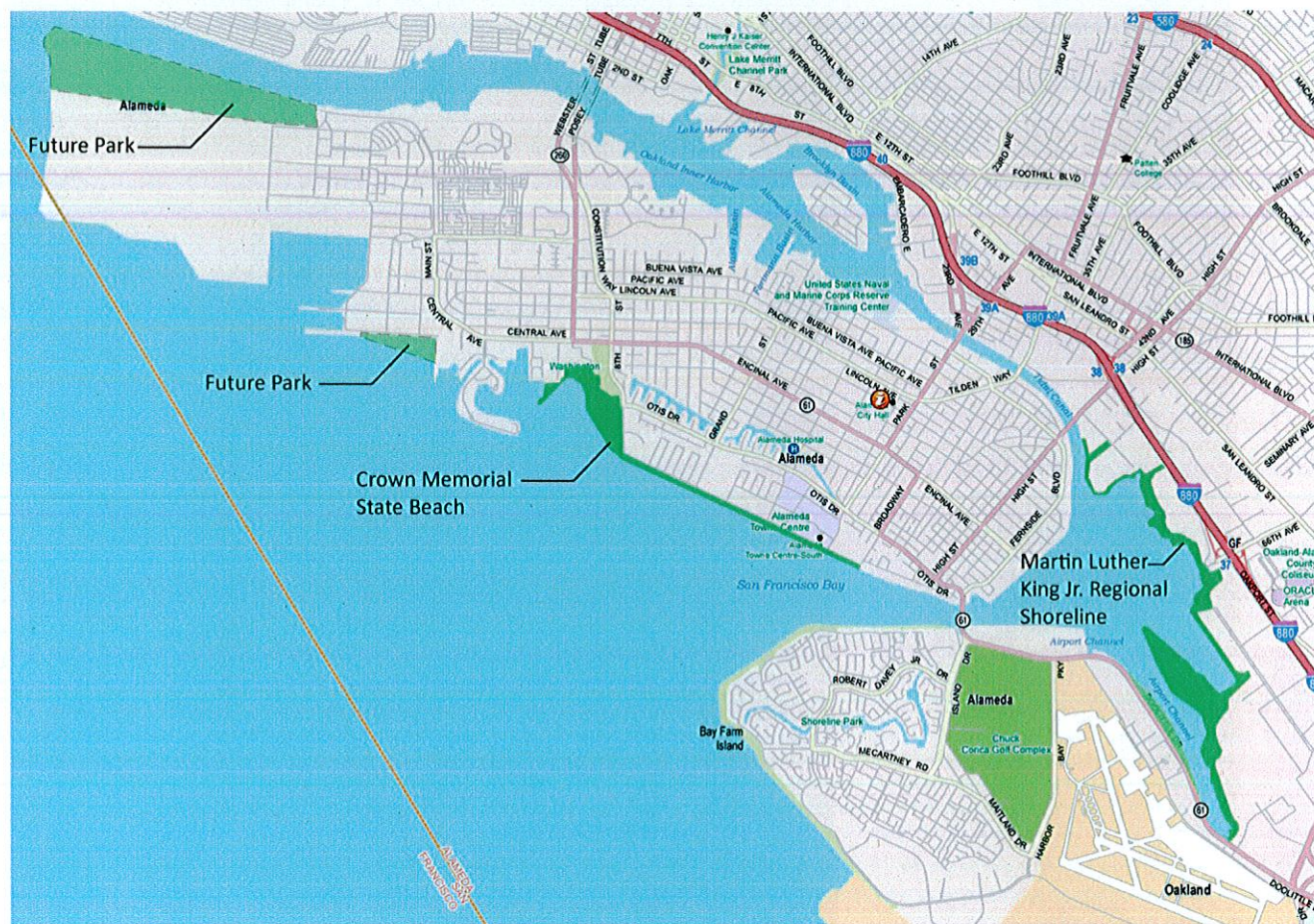


Figure 5.2 - Regional Parks

Park & Open Space Acreages - Special Use, Non-City-Owned, and Adjacent to City	
Chuck Corica Golf Complex	325 acres
Robert Crown Memorial Beach	80 acres
Alameda Point Proposed EBRPD (min.)	145 acres
Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline (includes wetlands, etc.)	741 acres
Total:	1291 acres

Figure 5.3 - Other Park & Open Space Acreages

- As an island community, Alameda promotes shoreline access, providing shoreline trails wherever possible. Portions of this trail access do not fall within the park acreage calculations, although the trails serve as recreational facilities for walking, jogging, biking, and passive enjoyment. Additional trail segments, separated from vehicular traffic, are found throughout the island, further augmenting the City's recreational facilities.
- Given the distribution of Alameda's parks and the City's flat topography, virtually all of Alameda's population is within easy walking distance of a park or open space facility.

GOAL: Alameda should provide a minimum of 3 acres of neighborhood and community park per 1,000 residents.



Figure 5.4 - Park Locations

Access and Service Areas

Alameda's parks are focal points and social centers of the neighborhoods. Residents tend to identify their neighborhoods by their local park. Most Alameda residents are within a five minute walk ($\frac{1}{4}$ mile), of an existing or planned local park, with the exception of some portions of the East Central and East End areas. According to the 1990 General Plan, 95% of the City's children live within $\frac{3}{8}$ mile of a park. When trail connections are considered, an even higher proportion of the City is within easy walking range of a recreational open space.

GOAL: All Alameda residents should be within a 5-minute walk of a park, open space or trail.



Figure 5.5 - Parks, Trails, and Park Service Areas (1/4 mile)

Sports Fields

Alameda has an active field sports community. Multiple youth and adult leagues participate in baseball, softball, soccer and other field sports. The Sports Fields Standards Table to the right shows the number of fields operated by ARPD, as well as those fields located on Alameda Unified School District (AUSD) property used by Alameda leagues. The table shows the existing ratio of fields to population, at the current population of 72,500 Alameda residents. It also shows the recommended standard for the City of Alameda based on the Community Needs Assessment, current use patterns and comparable communities' standards. "Diamond fields" include softball and baseball fields for youth and adults, including both 60' diamonds and 90' diamonds. "Rectangular fields" include both youth and adult sized fields which are used for soccer, football, rugby and/or lacrosse.

City sports fields operated by ARPD as well as AUSD fields are shown on the following maps, which also indicate a 1/2 mile service area for each field. The maps illustrate that sports fields are generally well distributed throughout the City, with most residents being within ½ mile of a sports field.

RECOMMENDED SPORTS FIELDS STANDARDS

Sports Facilities	Existing ARPD Fields	AUSD	Total Available Fields	Existing Ratio (including ARPD & AUSD)	Existing Ratio (including only ARPD fields)	Recommended Standard	Recommended Service Area
Diamond Fields	19	6	25	1:2,900	1:3,800	1:2,600	½ mile
Rectangular Fields	15	4	19	1:3,800	1:4,800	1:3,000	½ mile

Notes:

1. "Diamond Fields" includes softball and baseball, 60' & 90' diamonds.
2. "Rectangular Fields" includes both adult and youth sized fields, which may be used for soccer, football, rugby and/or lacrosse. They include fields overlaid on diamond outfields. Assume that 1 synthetic field is equivalent to 1.5 turf fields due to increased usage time.
3. Assumes current population of 72,500.

SPORTS FIELDS SHORTFALLS

Sports Facilities	Recommended Standard	Total Fields	SHORTFALLS	Current Population 72,500	Alameda Point Build-out Population 77,000	2030 Population 80,000
Diamond Fields	1:2,600	25		3*	5	6
Rectangular Fields	1:3,000	19		5	7	8

* Diamond Field shortfall includes 90' diamonds for adult league play.

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The number of fields, however, is not adequate to meet the current needs of those who wish to play field sports, even when Alameda Unified School District fields are included. As the fields are generally distributed among the neighborhoods rather than being consolidated into a community sports complex, there is a lack of facilities suitable for tournament play, and families with more than one participant must drive to various locations for games. There is currently a shortfall in the number of rectangular fields, which will increase when several of the Alameda Point fields are taken off-line for development. There is also a shortage of diamond fields, including an identified need for at least one additional regulation 90' baseball diamond for adult league play. As Alameda's population increases, the shortage of fields will also increase unless new fields are built.

GOAL: Alameda should provide diamond fields at the rate of 1 field per 2,600 residents, in a range of sizes to accommodate play from Little League, to softball, to adult hardball.



Figure 5.6 - Diamond Fields with 1/2 mile Service Areas

GOAL: Alameda should provide rectangular fields at the rate of 1 field per 3,000 residents, in a range of sizes to accommodate youth and adult soccer, football, rugby and lacrosse.

GOAL: Alameda should consolidate sports fields to provide a community sports facility with competitive fields and concession areas to facilitate tournament play.

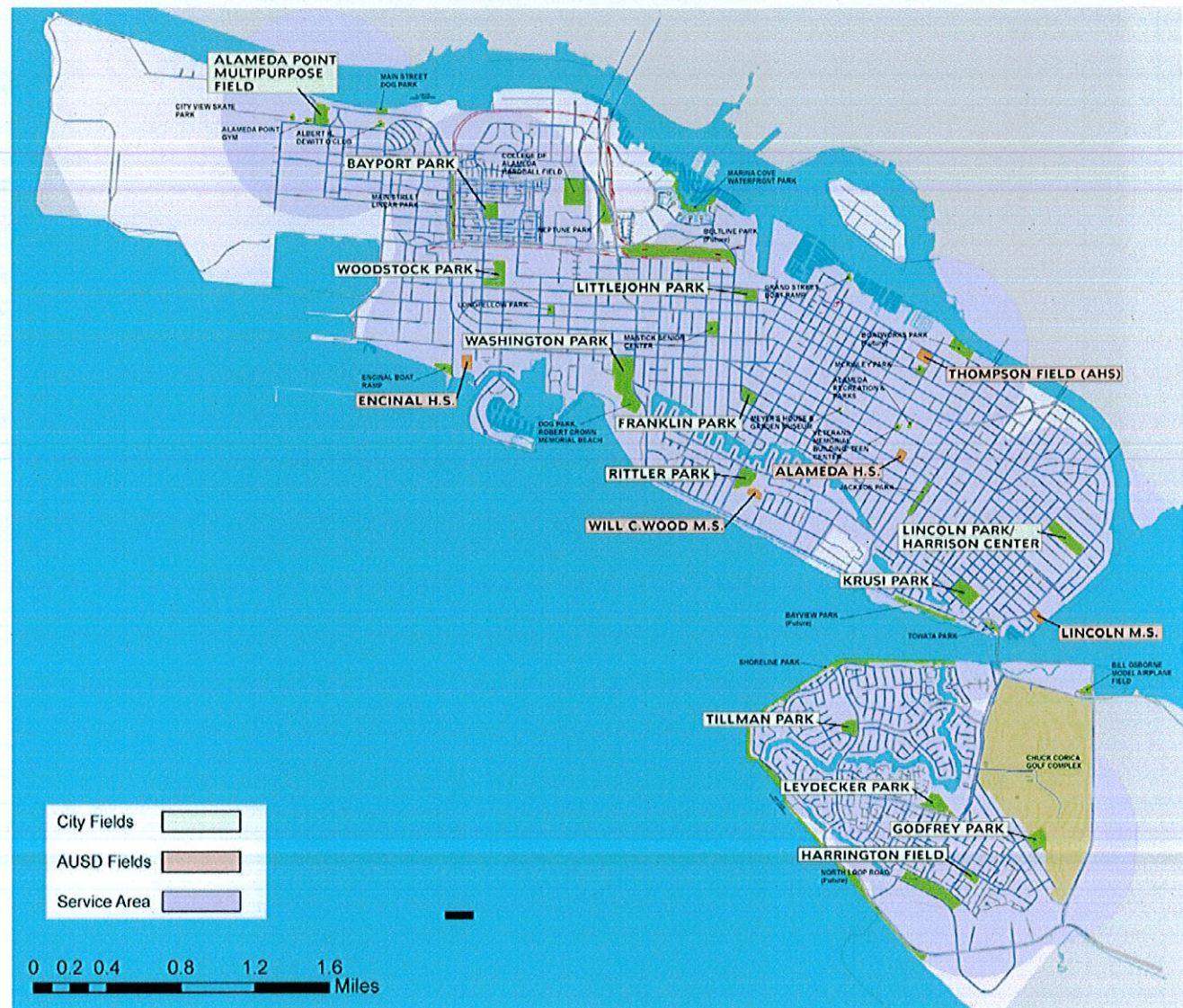


Figure 5.7 - Rectangular Fields with 1/2 mile Service Areas

BUILDING FACILITY GOALS AND STANDARDS

The Alameda Recreation and Parks Department (ARPD) provides programs and services to all Alameda residents from toddlers, tiny tots, youth, and teens to adults and active seniors. ARPD also has many partners in providing recreational and educational programs to the community, such as the Alameda Unified School District (AUSD) and the Boys & Girls Club.

The backbone of the City's recreation system is its park facilities, which cultivate the character and ambiance of their respective neighborhoods in the Island City. The City's first three recreation buildings – McKinley, Washington, and Lincoln – were built in the early 1900s. Since then ARPD has been steadily increasing both its community parks and its recreation facilities, adding new facilities approximately every 10 years through the 1980s.

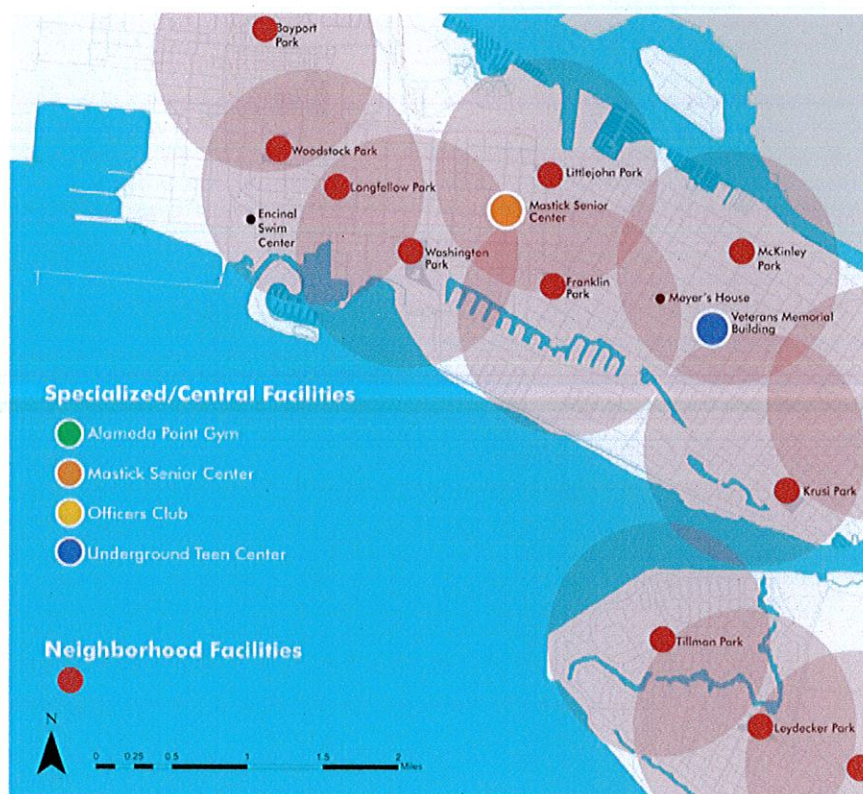


Figure 5.8 - Facilities Map

Facilities Assessments

ARPD's current facilities were assessed based on documents and information provided by the City, and on ARPD staff-guided tours of each facility in the summer of 2011. The facilities not included in the assessment study included the Krusi Park building (a replacement project is underway); the Alameda Theatre; the model airplane field; the golf complex; and the City's and School District's aquatics facilities, which were the subject of a separate recent assessment study.

ARPD's facilities are generally well maintained. However, many are showing their age, and in many cases are in need of refurbishment and code upgrades. There are significant opportunities to improve facilities systemwide to meet current accessibility guidelines and standards. Facilities such as the Alameda Point Gym and the Officers Club are candidates for major renovation of building envelopes and major systems.

More detailed assessment findings and recommendations for each facility are provided in the chapter on Existing Conditions.

System Analysis

The City's current recreation service model has smaller neighborhood facilities providing recreational services to their local communities, and larger specialized facilities providing citywide services.



- Neighborhood facilities are a network of small buildings located in parks throughout the city. These facilities are convenient and well located within their communities. They support local community services such as preschool program, after school programs, community recreation classes, and summer youth camps. These facilities provide excellent community access due to their citywide distribution. They are only staffed when programs are being offered and can be operated independently on a per program basis.



- Specialized facilities have a citywide reach, focusing on specific client and/or program types. The Mastick Senior Center – the only ARPD facility with full time recreational staff – is centrally located and offers community-wide recreational programs. The Underground teen program at the Veterans Memorial Building operates during after-school hours. The Alameda Point Gym hosts organized league and recreational court uses.

In partnership with AUSD, the City offers aquatic programs at Encinal High School and Alameda High School. The aquatic facilities were recently assessed in a separate study, which recommended significant improvements or replacement of both. The City recently made the policy decision not to build or refurbish its own aquatic facilities, but to continue to provide aquatic programs through ongoing or new partnerships.

In the analysis of the services and facilities offered and operated by ARPD, several things became clear:

- The neighborhood facilities provide efficient and accessible space that supports preschool programs, after school programs, summer camps, localized recreation programs, and community space.



- The Mastick Senior Center provides excellent programs and services to seniors as well as a small amount of general community programming.
- The Alameda Point Gym and the Officers Club are unique links to the character and history of Alameda, but in their current condition the facilities limit recreation programming.
- The Underground Teen Center program is limited by its current location.
- There is a need for a centrally-located community center that supports citywide multi-generational recreational programming and services.



System Goals

To guide the recommendations for the master plan for facilities, the City established system goals that included:

- Maximize existing resources – where possible, reuse existing City buildings rather than build new;
- Maximize partnerships – in order to provide efficient and sustainable services, continue to leverage partnerships for both recreation programs and facilities;
- Maximize revenue – consider cost recovery opportunities, design flexibility, independent use, and opportunities for rentals and revenue generation; and
- Maximize efficiency – reduce operational duplication and provide services, programs, and facilities as efficiently as possible.

These goals helped shape and evaluate the potential facility development scenarios, and form the foundation of the recommended facility development strategy.